

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2009**

The monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, December 7, 2009, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. Vice-Chair, Mr. Paul Brule, in the absence of the Chairperson, Paul Silva, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 PM.

Present: Paul E. Brule, Vice-Chair, William M. O'Dell (7:17 PM), Treasurer, Denise R. Arsenault, John C. Bento, Diana B. Campbell (7:11 PM), Karen A. Lynch and John P. Saviano; Edward P. Mara, Superintendent; Melinda L. Thies, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance; Leslie J. Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Mary N. Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title I; and Andrew D. Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor

Absent: Paul Silva and Marjorie J. McBride

OPENING BUSINESS

All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ACCOLADES

The District Holiday Greeting Card, for the past several years, has been designed by a student. This year we asked Art Teacher, Lynn Ramos, to have students at Colt Andrews School create a design for consideration. Several students submitted their drawings--they were all very special but only one could be chosen for the card. A gift certificate to Don's Art shop was presented to the artist whose drawing was used on the 2009 Holiday Card-- a fourth grader—Samantha Machado.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC FORUM

None

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Mr. Saviano motioned to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Lynch seconded. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Bento motioned to seal the minutes to the October 26 and November 23 Executive Sessions; Mrs. Lynch seconded. The

motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Brule reported for Mr. O'Dell—the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 14, 6:30 PM at Oliver. Later in the meeting Mr. O'Dell stated he will be meeting with Mrs. Silva on Thursday to set the agenda so agenda items should be directed to him as soon as possible. First Student has offered tours of their facilities; interested people can arrange this through Mr. O'Dell.

POLICY/ COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mrs. Arsenault reported for Mrs. Campbell—there is no meeting in December; their next meeting is on Monday, January 4 at 6:30 PM at Oliver. Later in the meeting, Mrs. Campbell said she has spoken to Mrs. Thies about putting science on the Policy Agenda, as there is a need for some public relations with the science department; all interested people are encouraged to attend.

PERSONNEL/ CONTRACT NEGOTIATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Saviano had nothing to report.

FUTURE ENROLLMENT AND FACILITIES TASK FORCE

Mrs. Lynch reported their next meeting is in January. The group has been working on four different courses of action, investigating different short and long term options to deal with possible overcrowding and a potential influx of students; one viable option is to open up enabling legislation. Even though the Warren Town Council had previously voted they saw no need for a change, it was felt by the Task Force that some members were unclear about the details and should be reconsidered as an option; both Mrs. Thies and Dr. Mara support this idea. Mr. Bento added that the School Committee would have to pass the proposal as a body, the Town Councils would have to approve, then the Senators and Representatives would take it to the State level.

Mrs. Lynch wished to make it very clear that all these proceedings would not change the legislation, but is merely the method to get the question before the voters of Bristol and Warren to make a change. Mrs. Arsenault reiterated that the option to change legislation to allow the District to place elementary students in schools in either town is only one of four possibilities under consideration. Mr. Saviano believes this is a good idea; the more alternatives before us, the better off we will be. Mrs. Thies added this would have to go to the legislature and then to ballot, most likely a six-month period; this would certainly provide the District another option and some flexibility. Mr. Saviano said it may coincide with the next election. Mr. Brule stated that if we were in an emergency situation we could do it now; he does not think Warren will give up their last school, as it

is the only school over which they have total control.

Wellness Committee

Mrs. Campbell wished to inform parents the Wellness Committee is well aware of the issues the student have with whole wheat; they have discussed it in depth, trying to be creative and make it more palatable. Mrs. Campbell congratulated Mr. T.J. DelSanto of the High School, who was awarded a \$10,000 grant to install a walking trail around the High School, which will help with stress management—a focus of the group for all levels of students. A survey conducted at Rockwell after NECAP testing revealed students were not getting a full night's sleep or eating a full breakfast, and some feared they would be in trouble if they did not perform well; as a result the Committee is working on strategies to prepare kids both physically and emotionally for test taking and test scores will improve. Dr. Mara feels these initiatives are warranted; the District does offer Grab and Go Breakfasts each morning that many students take advantage of.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

Attorney Henneous read a statement by Mr. Silva:

“First let me apologize for not being here tonight. Second, I thank you all for granting me this indulgence in having Andrew read this on my behalf. I am aware that this is a little out of the ordinary but I am sure that in the end you will understand my rationale.

As I reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting I came to realize that this is the last meeting that we will have Dr. Edward Mara and Mrs. Jane Correia here as employees of the school district. When I came to that realization, I felt compelled to send this message.

Ed, when you arrived here some seven years ago, you came as a replacement for an assistant superintendent that I had imagined would someday take over the helm and lead this district to great heights. At first look I was quite apprehensive. Someone that I had believed to have outstanding abilities had just left and I thought to myself, "Who is this guy taking his place?" That concern was greatly diminished almost immediately, by your interpersonal skills, personality and ability to work with our then superintendent, Tina Barboza. Your knowledge and abilities flourished quickly once you settled in. What transpired in the years that have past since then has been truly phenomenal.

You have managed to put forth a vision for this District that would fulfill the wishes and desires of much of this community. You accomplished, for our School District, what many people thought was impossible. To enable you to implement that vision, you managed to sell it to the existing staff, and you got them to climb on board. And as you filled vacant positions you always seemed to find individuals that would further enhance your vision. Over the years you were able to form a "team" of individuals striving for success. Collectively,

under your leadership, that team did indeed; manage to raise our District to new heights and to make us one of the premier school districts in the State of Rhode Island.

Over that same period of time I have come to know, not only Dr. Edward Mara the employee and consummate professional, but also Ed, the individual. In that regard I have been given an opportunity to get to know a person of integrity and compassion, someone that I am proud to call, “a friend”.

For the time that you have given of yourself to this District, the efforts you have made to move the quality of education forward, the dreams and vision that you have made a reality, and for just being a friend. I want to publicly say ‘Thank you!’

Jane, what can actually be said of your time and service to this community. Most everything has already been said. I remember when your name first appeared on one of the School Committee’s agendas. Nine people wanted to know who you were and in very much the same way that the committee acts today, they proceeded to drill our then Superintendent about your credentials. He obviously wasn’t very good at inflating your abilities because he only managed to convince 5 members to vote to approve your appointment. I have often wondered, ‘What would that vote be today if it were taken?’

Anyway, despite the vote, you made a commitment to come here, or

should I say that you agreed to be 'committed here'. As I recall, one of the first things that you brought to light were some 'minor' financial issues. If my memory serves me correctly, you discovered that we were actually running in the red. What a way to start your tenure with us! Even during times like that, you always managed to present yourself and your thoughts in a professional manner. As I watched you over the years I could see the consummate professional, someone who was not only dedicated to her job and career, but someone who took a personal interest in the well being of this School District. You seemed to watch over our finances almost as if they were your own. As a result of your hard work, long hours and determination, this district has gone from being one in financial straights to one that is fiscally sound.

Prior to your arrival Joint Finance Committee meetings were a place to produce ulcers and indigestion. The relationship between the School District and the Joint Finance Committee was, to say the least, 'strained'. Since then things have changed; those meetings have gone from continual attacks and accusations to productive exchanges of information. With you guiding us this School District has managed to garner some evidence of respect and credibility.

These things have come to us on your coat tails; it has been the image that you have graced this community with. When speaking with almost anyone in this community, as soon as your name is mentioned there is immediately an element of honesty that is

anticipated. Your values and commitment are beyond reproach and like no other that I have seen, not only in my years as a School Committee member, but during my lifetime. Much in the same manner as a successful man should say to his wife, this District should say to you, ‘You complete Me!’

For your endless dedication and service, for making this District ‘complete’ and for simply being ‘Jane’, I want to say ‘Thank you!’

Lastly, while I haven’t asked each of them individually, I believe that I could speak for the entire School Committee, past School Committees and even members of this community, in wishing you both the best of luck in all of your future endeavors. May God bless you both as you have blessed us.”

Standing ovation.

Mr. Brule wished both Mrs. Correia and Dr. Mara a long, happy and healthy retirement, it is deserved; he asked them to stop in at times as well.

SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES

Recommendation # S2009-66 -- PERSONNEL

A. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the extracurricular positions listed below for the 2009-10 school year only (pending certification, funding and sufficient sign-ups to warrant running these programs):

HEALTHY HUSKIES WELLNESS CENTER/GYM AREA SUPERVISORS

- 1. Supervisor (Winter) Thomas DelSanto**
- 2. Supervisor (Winter) Gerard Spence**

B. CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following application for a certified substitute pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

CERTIFIED

Name Area/Level

- 1. Daniel J. Amaral Health/Phys.Ed.**

C. CLASSIFIED SUBSTITUTES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following applications for classified substitutes pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE

- 1. Octavio S. Medeiros**
- 2. Manuel A. Tavares**

D. LEAVE OF ABSENCE: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to grant a leave of absence for a Secretary as follows:

- 1. Elizabeth Patton Secretary – Mt. Hope High**
Effective: December 2, 2009 through April 2,
2010, pending release from physician
Reason: Leave in accordance with Article 20
of the Master Agreement

Recommendation #S 2009-66 : That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of three Bristol families to home school their children for the 2009-2010

school year, adhering to the requirements as set forth by the Bristol Warren Regional School District.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano motioned to approve; Mr. O'Dell seconded. Mrs. Lynch asked how far into the school year can parents request home schooling. Mrs. Thies responded petitions can be submitted throughout the school year; a delay could be due to a family being new to the District or to gathering documentation. The motion to approved passed by a vote of 8 to 0.

Recommendation #S 2009-67: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, adopt the Resolution Adopting Restatement and Amendment of the Bristol Warren Regional School District 403(b) Retirement Plan.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano motioned to approve; Mr. O'Dell and Mrs. Lynch seconded. Mr. Brule explained that the plan is just being updated. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There is no need for Executive Session.

Announcements:

Dr. Mara thanked the School Committee, past and present, saying it has been a true joy to be in this School District. He has cherished the

support he received from this and previous Committees so that he could do the work he was hired to do. All believed the District could fly and he knows Mrs. Thies will continue that progress. He thanked them for being good to our students, because that is why we are all here. He wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mrs. Correia stated that as Mr. Silva wrote, it was a rocky start; once hired, she did feel committed to this District; Joint Finance meetings were horrendous; we have come a long way; she is very proud to have served as Director of Administration and Finance. She thanked the Committee. Mr. Brule said it was a privilege to have her.

Mrs. Thies said she is very grateful for the work of Dr. Mara and Mrs. Correia and the foundation they laid; she assured the public our foundation is firm. The mission of the District is firmly established and we will do well by Dr. Mara. Mrs. Thies truly believes this District is poised to make some transformational changes in how we deliver instruction; she thanked Dr. Mara and Mrs. Correia for providing that opportunity; the new administration is ready and poised to move forward.

Mr. Brule wished everyone Happy Holidays and a long and happy retirement to Dr. Mara and Mrs. Correia.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:33 PM

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Saviano, motioned to adjourn at 7:33 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**William M. O'Dell, Treasurer, for
Marjorie J. McBride, Secretary**

/c